

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 IO-10 SCCT-01 SAM-01 SAB-01

CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SY-05 /084 W

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R 151515Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1678

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION USUN

USMISSION USNATO

DIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NICOSIA 1631

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT CY SY LY EG TU

SUBJECT: THE PLO IN CYPRUS: INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

1. SUMMARY. ON MARCH 31 THE GOC ANNOUNCED ITS RECOGNITION OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (PLO) AND AGREEMENT TO EVENTUAL OPENING OF PLO OFFICE IN NICOSIA. CHARGE'S CONVERSATIONS WITH ISRAELI AMBASSADOR, CHARGES OF LIBYAN, SYRIAN AND EGYPTIAN EMBASSIES PROVIDE SEVERAL VERSIONS OF BACKGROUND TO DECISION AND IMPLICATIONS OF PLO PRESENCE. ISRAELIS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF GOC-PLO COOPERATION, MAKARIOS' JUDGEMENT; THEY SUSPECT DEAL WITH LYSSARIDES. ARABS EMPHASIZE OVERT POLITICAL QUID PRO QUO AND REJECT IDEA OF VIOLENT ROLE FOR PLO. EMBASSY'S INFORMATION ON RECOGNITION DEAL IS SCANT. WE RESERVE JUDGEMENT
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BUT TEND TOWARDS ARAB INTERPRETATION, WHILE ADMITTING THAT

PLO PRESENCE COULD COMPLICATE ALREADY VOLATILE SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

2. ISRAELI REACTION: ISRAELIS ARE PREDICTABLY MIFFED AT GOC'S RECOGNITION OF PLO. AMBASSADOR CLAIMS ("ON GOOD AUTHORITY") THAT DECISION WAS TEKAN PRIVATELY BY ARCHBISHOP MAKARIOS WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, POLITICAL AND COMMUNITY LEADERS, ALL OF WHOM, HE SAYS, WERE SHOCKED AT DECISION AND WOULD HAVE ARGUED FORCEFULLY AGAINST HAD THEY BEEN CONSULTED. ISRAELI AMBASSADOR DISCOUNTS RATIONALE THAT MAKARIOS WAS BLACKMAILED BY PLO THREAT TO OPEN OFFICE IN TURKISH CYPRIOT AREA IF GOC REFUSED RECOGNITION. HE REFERS TO HIS CONVERSATION WITH DENKTASH IN WHICH LATTER DENIED ANY SUCH PLOY, SAYING HE WOULD HAVE INFORMED CLERIDES AT ONCE TO ASSURE HIM OF TURK CYPRIOTS' NON-COOPERATION HAD PLO BROACHED SUBJECT.

3. MOTIVES: SEVERAL MOTIVES ARE CITED FOR MAKARIOS' MOVE. FIRST, RECOGNITION IS OBVIOUSLY ATTEMPT TO CURRY FAVOR WITH ARAB STATES BY OPENING DOOR TO PLO AND DELIVERING CORRESPONDING SLAP IN FACE TO ISRAEL, WITH WHICH CYPRUS HAS TRADITIONALLY ENJOYED CORDIAL RELATIONS. MAKARIOS EXPECTS RECIPROCAL ARAB SUPPORT FOR GOC STAND AGAINST TURKISH CYPRIOTS AND GOT. ISRAELI AMBASSADOR TERMS THIS EXPECTATION NAIVE, A "DESPERATION MOVE"; PLO/ARABS WILL NEVER AGREE TO ACT EFFECTIVELY AGAINST TURKISH INTERESTS AND WILL USE MAKARIOS TO THEIR OWN ENDS, GIVING ONLY LIP SERVICE TO GREEK CYPRIOT CAUSE.

4. LYSSARIDES CONNECTION: SECOND, ISRAELIS SAY, RECOGNITION IS PART OF SECRET DEAL BETWEEN MAKARIOS AND EDEK (RADICAL SOCIALIST PARTY) LEADER VASSOS LYSSARIDES. FACING AN INTRANSIGENT TURKEY, INCREASINGLY BOXED IN BY US/UK'S RESISTANCE TO "INTERNATIONALIZATION", SEEING PALTRY RESULTS OF UNGA AND SC GAMBITS, AND RECOGNIZING IMPOTENCE (SOMETIMES HOSTILITY) OF CENTER AND RIGHT SEGMENTS OF GREEK CYPRIOT POLITICAL SPECTRUM, MAKARIOS SEEKS SUPPORT FROM ONLY AVAILABLE SOURCE, THE EXTREME LEFT. MAKARIOS IS DESPERATE FOR RUNNING ROOM. WITH LYSSARIDES INCREASINGLY ACTIVE AMONG GREEK CYPRIOT DISPLACED POPULATION, AND WITH FRUSTRATION OVER PRESENT SITUATION ON ISLAND VIS-A-VIS TURKS RUNNING HIGH EVEN AMONG RELATIVELY PROSPEROUS GREEK CYPRIOTS, MAKARIOS IS ATTEMPTING TO STRENGTHEN HIS HAND BY

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MOVING CLOSER TO LEADER (LYSSARIDES) MOST LIKELY TO PROFIT FROM A SHARP INTERNAL POLITICAL SWING TO THE LEFT. ANOTHER ASPECT OF MAKARIOS-LYSSARIDES DEAL, ACCORDING TO ISRAELIS, HAS LYSSARIDES USING HIS CONNECTIONS WITH SYRIA AND LIBYA TO ARRANGE TRAINING OF GREEK CYPRIOT GUERRILLA BANDS FOR USE AGAINST TURKISH ARMY. ISRAELIS CLAIM "FIRM INTELLIGENCE" THAT LYSSARIDES, DURING HIS FREQUENT TRIPS TO SYRIA AND ELSEWHERE IN ARAB WORLD, IS BUSY PREPARING FOR GUERRILLA WARFARE WITH MAKARIOS' COVERT

BLESSINGS. WHILE ISRAELIS DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN PLO AND "OTHER
TERRORIST GROUPS", THEY CLAIM THAT PLO IS UMBRELLA FOR
LYSSARIDES' SCHEMES.

5. TERRORISM: ANOTHER DIMENSION TO PLO PRESENCE IS WHAT
ISRAELIS SEE AS INCREASED POTENTIAL FOR TERRORIST ACTIVITY, IF
NOT DIRECTLY BY PLO THEN CYGIUGH ONE OF ITS OFF-
SHOOTS.

ISRAELIS REMEMBER APRIL 1973 PLO BOMBING OF THEIR AMBASSADOR'S
HOME ANJ ATTACK ON EL-AL PLANE HERE AND REMAIN ON PERMANENT
STATE OF ALERT FOR REOCCURRENCE. THEY ARE ALSO CONCERNED OVER
PLO'S ROLE AS BEHIND-THE-SCENES ADVISOR FOR GREEK CYPRIOT HIGH-
JACKINGS OR TERORIST ATTENTATS AGAINST TURKISH OVERSEAS PERSBNNEL
AND OFFICES. THEY SEE NO END TO PLO'S MISCHIEF-MAKING CAPACITY
AND CONSIDER MAKARIOS A FOOL FOR OPENING NEW PANDORA'S BOX IN AN
ALREADY EXPLOSIVE SITUATION.

6. ARAB INTERPRETATION: WHILE EMPHASIS VARIES,VIEWS OF LIBYANS,
EGYPTIANS AND SYRIANS FOLLOW COMMON LINE. OVERT, POLITICAL QUID
PROPQUO CHARACTER OF GOC'S RECOGNITION IN RETURN FOR PLO SUPPORT
IS UNDERSCORED. RECOGNITION IS NATURAL CONSEQUENCE OF ARAFAT'S
"UN TRIUMPH" LAST FALL AND PLO CAMPAIGN TO RECRUIT INTERNATIONAL
SUPPORT, PARTICULARLY AMONG NON-ALIGNED POWERS. PLO IS GLAD TO
HAVE CYPRUS VOTE AT UN AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL FORA. PERSONAL
ENDORSEMENT BY MAKARIOS AS PRESTIGIOUS NON-ALIGNED LEADER ALSO
IMPORTANT. NONE OF OUR INTERLOCUTORS WAS WILLING TO SPECIFY HOW
PLO WOULD RECIPROCATATE WITH "CONCRETE SUPPORT", AS MAKARIOS HAS
SOUGHT, TO GREEK CYPRIOT CAUSE AGAINST TURKS. SYRIAN NOTES THAT
CYPRUS QUESTION IS NOT RELIGIOUS, THAT EACH ARAB COUNTRY DECIDES
POLICY ON POLITICAL GROUNDS, NOT ON BASIS OF MOSLEM IDENDIFY.

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R 151515Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1679
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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7. GUERILLA ACTIVITY AND TERRORISM REJECTED: ALL THREE ARAB DIPLOMATS REJECT OUT OF HAND NOTIONS THAT PLO WILL A) TRAIN GUERILLAS, B) HELP GREEK CYPRIOTS IN INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM BUSINESS, OR C) REPRESENT A SECURITY THREAT TO EITHER ISRAELI OR OTHER FOREIGN MISSIONS ON CYPRUS. THEY CLAIM THAT PEACEFUL POLITICAL LOBBYING IS PLO'S KEY POLICY IN WHICH GUERILLA ACTIVITY AND TERRORISM ON THIRD-PARTY SOIL HAVE NO PLACE. GRANTED SUCH THINGS TOOK PLACE IN THE PAST (WE REMINDED EGYPTIAN OF KHARTOUM), PLO NO LONGER HAS NEED OF SUCH TACTICS AND WOULD NOT ASSIST OTHER PALESTINIAN GROUPS IN TERROR GUERILLA OPERATIONS. INDEED, UNGA SUCCESS GUARANTEES PLO'S PEACEFUL ACTIVITY ON ISLAND, ARABS SAY--WHY WOULD PLO CHOOSE TO DESTROY RECENT POLITICAL GAINS THROUGH ACCOCIATION WITH VIOLENCE HERE? IN ANY EVENT, PLO DOES NOT REQUIRE DIPLOMATIC CONFIDENTIAL

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STATUS TO CARRY OUT TERRORIST ACTIVITY. SYRIAN AND LIBYAN STEADFASTLY DENY THAT PLO WILL TRAIN GREEK CYPRIOT GUERILLASM IN ADDITION TO ARGUING THAT PLO IS NOT IN BUSINESS, THEY CITE STANDARD ARGUMENT THAT CERTAINTY OF DRASTIC TURKISH RIPOSTE MAKES GUERILLA WARFARE ON CYPRUS IMPRACTICAL.

8. LIBYAN AND EGYPTIAN TELL US DATE FOR OPENING OF PLO OFFICE IN NICOSIA HAS NOT BEEN SET. BOTH SAY PLO "IS IN NO HURRY", SINCE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF RECOGNITION BY GOC HAS BEEN ACHIEVED AND ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICE CAN FOLLOW IN DUE PXURSE.

9. EMBASSY COMMENT: OUR INFORMATION ON PLO IS LIMITED TO SEVERAL INTELLIGENCE REPORTS OF UNDETERMINED RELIABILITY AND FRAGMENTARY CONVERSATIONS WITH GOC OFFICIALS. WE ARE THEREFORE IN NO POSITION AT THIS TIME TO PROVIDE IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS. HOWEVER, WE OFFER FOLLOWING INITIAL OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS:

A. PLO HAS NOT YET OPENED NICOSIA OFFICE BUT IS NEGOTIATING FOR DOWNTOWN SITE NEAR OLD CITY. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ONLY ONE OF THREE-MAN DELEGATION WHICH CAME TO DISCUSS RECOGNITION REMAINS IN NICOSIA. (PRESS REPORTS THAT OTHER PLO OFFICIALS NOW IN NICOSIA IN CONNECTION WITH AAPSO MEETING.)

B. WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION THAT LYSSARIDES IS NOW ENGAGED IN GUERRILLA TRAINING OR TERRORIST DEAL WITH PLO OR OTHE PALES-TINIAN GROUP ON BEHALF OF GIC OR MAKARIOS PERSONALLY. SUCH ACTIVITY, HOWEVER, IS ENTIRELY IN KEEPING WITH LYSSARIDES' PHILOSOPHY. GIVEN PAST HISTORY OF HOBNOBBING WITH ARAB RADICALS FOR HD PERSONAL ENDS ON CYPRUS, WE CANNOT EXCLUDE ITS OCCURRENCE IN FUTURE, WITH OR WITHOUT PLO'S HELP.

C. IN PRESENT INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL CLIMATE, WE TEND TO CREDIT ARAB CONTENTION THAT RECOGNITION IS PART OF PLO-MAKARIOS QUID PRO QUO BASED UPON MUTUAL SUPPORT FOR RESPECTIVE CAUSES. IT MAKES SENSE IN CONTEXT OF MAKARIOS' PLANS TO VISIT ARAB STATES IN NEAR FUTURE.

D. FROM NICOSIA VANTAGE POINT, PLO'S INTEREST IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA WOULD APPEAR BEST SERVED BY NON-VIOLENT ACTIVITY ON CYPRUS.

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E. DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION IS NOT NECESSARY FOR PLO TO ENGAGE IN TERRORIST ACTIVITY AGAINST ISRAELI (OR US) MISSION HERE. ADEQUATE COVERT SUPPORT COULD BE - AND HAS BEEN - PROVIDED BY LIBYANS OR SYRIANS. THEREFORE, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF PLO OFFICE SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASES TERRORIST THREAT AGAINST AMERICAN PRESENCE.

F. WE BELIEVE ISRAELI THEORY THAT MAKARIOS HAS SOUGHT CLOSE COOPERATION WITH LYSSARIDES FOR INTERNAL POLITICAL REASONS IS WELL FOUNDED AND THAT LYSSARIDES PROBABLY PLAYED SIGNIFICANT EXPEDITING ROLE IN NEGOTIATING PLO PACKAGE. DECISION TO OPEN PLO OFFICE HAS FURTHER ESTRANGED MAKARIOS FROM RIGHTIST CAMP, WHICH HAS BEEN HIGHLY CRITICAL.

G. BENIGN AS EXISTENCE OF PLO OFFICE MAY BE, ITS PRESUMED LINK WITH LYSSARIDES AND COMPANY ADDS ANOTHER DANGEROUS INGREDIENT TO AN ALREADY HIGHLY SEASONED CYPRIOT POLITICAL STEW. IT IS CERTAINLY NOT A FACTOR MAKING FOR STABILITY AND BEARS CLOSE WATCHING IN THE FUTURE.

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